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ABSTRACT

This booklet provides a brief overview of educational evaluation and presents basic guidelines for developing a cooperative school-community program of educational evaluation. It is designed for use in conjunction with a lengthy handbook, "Education for the People: Volume III," which explains in more detail basic principles and methods of evaluation that can be used in assessing the effectiveness of educational priorities, programs, and personnel. The booklet briefly examines different approaches to educational evaluation, discusses the role of different community members and school personnel in educational evaluation, and describes different stages of the evaluative process. (JG)

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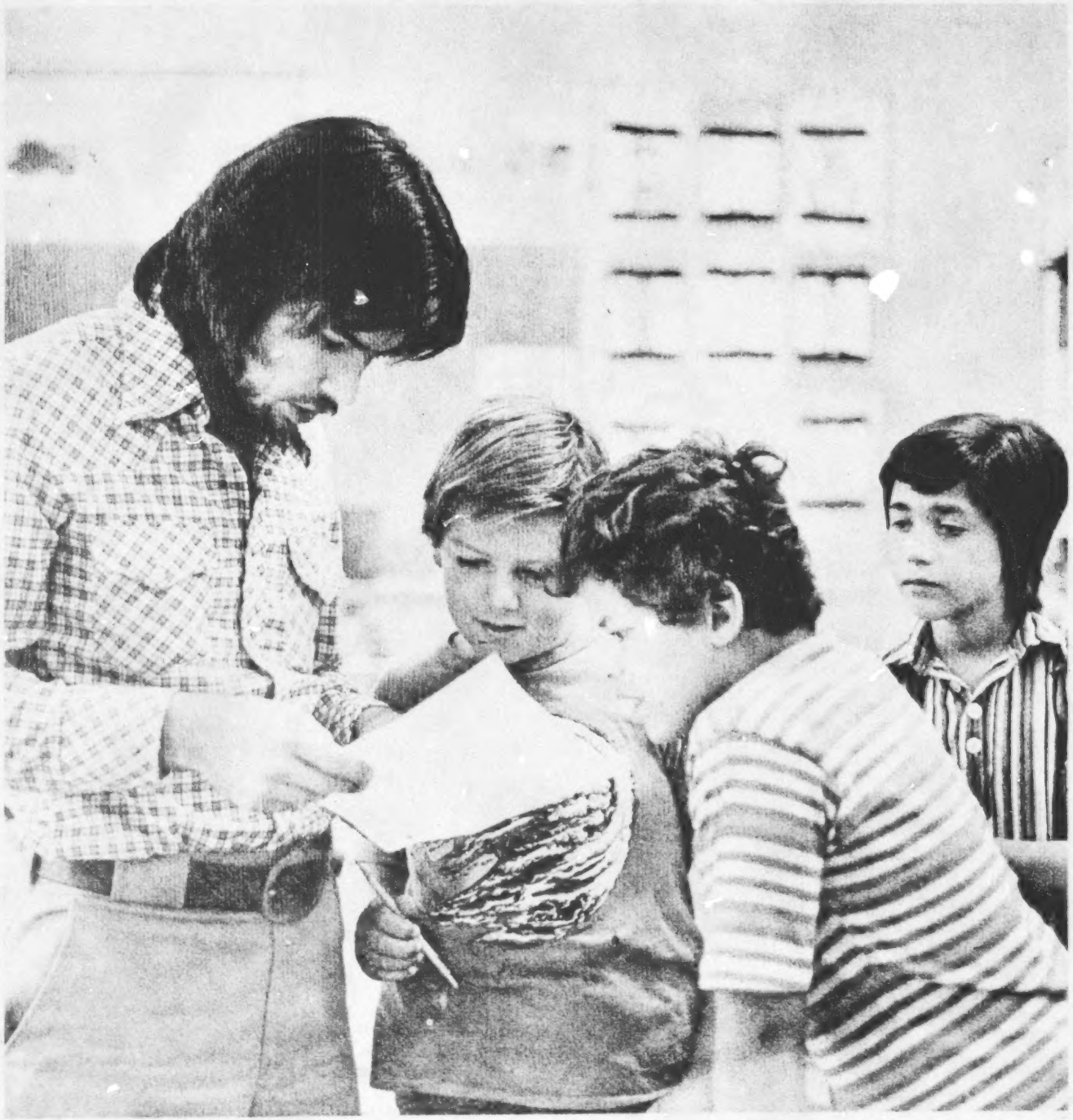
SCHOOL=COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN DETERMINING SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

TO BE USED IN
CONJUNCTION WITH VOLUME 3
OF EDUCATION FOR THE PEOPLE

ED 068 672



"The support and success of public education is directly dependent upon achieving and maintaining public trust in the schools and those who run them, and in assuring that educational programs paid for with public funds are appropriate to public needs."*

*Joint Committee on Educational Goals and Evaluation. **Progress Report to the Legislature and State Board of Education.** Sacramento: California Legislature, July 1973, pp. 1-2.

SCHOOL=COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN DETERMINING SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

THE PUBLIC AND YOUR SCHOOLS

The challenge facing public education today is to provide the opportunity for education to every citizen, and more, to provide an opportunity for quality education relevant to each person. To achieve that goal, schools must learn to respond better to the range of needs, hopes, and individual differences that make up a society of many cultures and economic conditions.

The best way to insure that schools are responsive to the people is through full participation by the people in the evaluation of education. Education is too vital a function of life to be controlled by a few, no matter how good their intentions. Students, parents, teachers and taxpayers have a real stake in the quality of their schools — they must be heard: they must share in the responsibility for providing sound education; they must accept the responsibility to participate in developing the educational system; they must accept and be actively involved in learning from each other; and they must share in evaluating. Such is the nature of true education.

School districts will choose their own methods for citizen participation in school evaluation. This booklet presents some proven methods to assist in this task.

EVALUATION FOLLOWS GOAL SETTING

Volumes I and II of **Education For The People** proposed a process for setting goals which involved all members of the school=community: students, parents, teachers other school staff and citizens at large. Its aim was to facilitate the process of involving citizens directly in their local schools so that there would be better understanding on the part of educators as to what citizens want their children to learn and better understanding on the part of citizens related to the educational program which must be developed to accomplish derived goals.

In issuing the third volume of **Education For The People**** the Joint Committee on Educational Goals and Evaluation and State Department of Education propose to expand the dialogue between educators and the other members of the school=community by getting citizens involved in examining and evaluating the extent to which goals are being achieved. This booklet presents basic evaluation knowledge for all members of the school=community.

****Joint Committee on Educational Goals and Evaluation, Education For The People, Volume III, a Handbook for Determining School Effectiveness, Sacramento: California Legislature and Department of Education, 1975.*

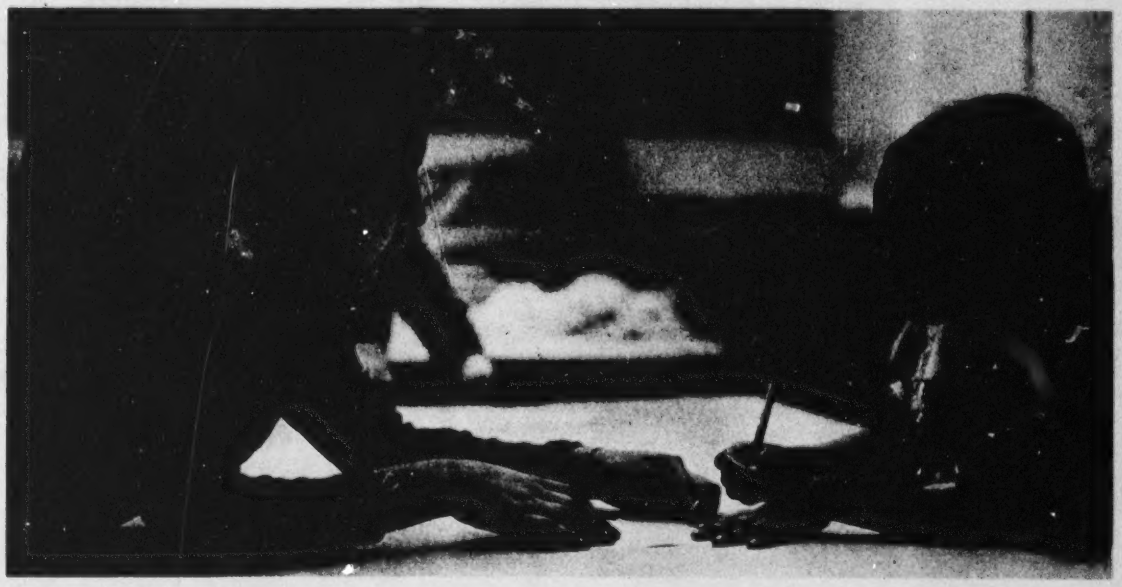
Volume III explores evaluation in some detail as reference material for school=community members on committees or councils with specific responsibility for developing or carrying out evaluation programs. **Volume III** also presents a glossary so that people will have a common understanding of terms used in evaluation.

SCHOOL=COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN DETERMINING SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

WHAT IS EVALUATION?

Evaluation is a process for gathering information to determine how schools and students are achieving the goals set by the school=community. For example, a goal might be that students should enjoy attending school (the supposition being that learning more likely takes place when students have positive rather than negative attitudes toward school activities). Several kinds of information might be gathered to assess whether a student enjoys school: asking the student directly whether he or she enjoys school; asking similar questions of the student's peers, family and teachers; and observing the student both within and without the school to determine the extent to which the school experiences leave the person joyous.

After information is gathered, it is combined to get an indication of how well the student enjoyed school. The collection of such indications for all students in the school might reveal that some proportion of students enjoyed school very much, another proportion enjoyed school mildly, another proportion was indifferent, and another proportion disliked school. The sizes of their proportions would give the school=community a meaningful evaluation of how well that particular goal was being reached. A complete evaluation program for the school=community would develop such evaluative information for every goal.

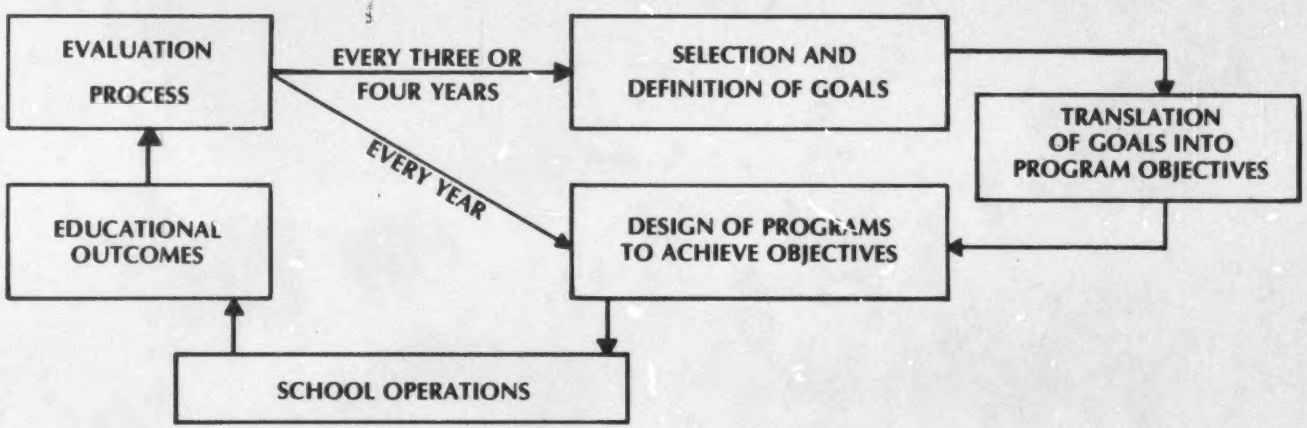


WHY EVALUATE?

The primary purpose of evaluation is improvement of school programs. After a school=community develops goals, the school develops programs intended to achieve those goals. The evaluation process measures how well the programs have actually brought students to the desired goals. The evaluation process may identify clues as to how programs might be improved (but pursuit of those clues and the design of programs are not a part of the evaluation process).

For example, with respect to the goal of making school enjoyable, the evaluation process accomplishes its purpose by determining that, say, 85% of the students like school. The purpose then is to change the program to try to increase that proportion in the future. Parents and teachers might inquire more clearly into the nature of the dislikes, and take actions to alleviate underlying causes, such as:

(1) Transfer students whose personalities clash with certain teachers;



(2) Institute training programs for teachers who generate more dislike than like;

(3) Suggest changes in the program or learning environment to improve students' enjoyment of school;

(4) Institute tutoring programs for students whose dislike stems from their own poor performance in school;

(5) Arrange seminars to assist parents of disliking students to generate a more positive attitude toward school in their children.

Another purpose of evaluation is modification of program objectives. It may become apparent after several tries that a certain objective is impossible to achieve or at least impossible within the amount of resources reasonably devoted to programs for achieving it. Then the school=community would revise the objective to more modest dimensions. Thus, a school=community might decide it can't afford to try to make school enjoyable for every student and modify the objective to seek enjoyment or at least neutrality for a high proportion, say 80%, and to keep strong dislike down to a small proportion, say 3%.

The role of evaluation is shown by the accompanying chart which relates the major components of a community's education process.

These components continually recycle through the years. Goals are selected; goals are translated into program objectives; programs are designed; the school implements those programs; the programs achieve certain outcomes in children; the outcomes are evaluated. As a result of the evaluation, programs are modified and goals may be modified — and the cycle starts all over again with the long range goal of constantly reviewing and revitalizing the educational process.

Evaluation may serve another purpose (if the school=community desires) by including processes for evaluating outcomes that have no particular relation to school programs. Children learn a great deal from their parents, their brothers and sisters and other relatives, from their playmates and schoolmates, and from the community at large. The community may wish to set goals for this out-of-school learning. For example, an ethnically mixed community may consider tolerance to be an important goal for its children. The evaluation program could include a process for evaluating the progress of children toward that goal. In this way, the education of children is better shared between the home, the school, the community, and the child.

Figure 1 EVALUATION MATRIX

The Purposes of Evaluation for Decision-Makers at Each Level of Information

Decision-Makers / Level of Reporting of Information	Teachers/Principal and Instructional Staff	Individual Student	Parents of Individual Student	School Advisory Council	District, State, and Federal Officials
INDIVIDUAL STUDENT/ TEACHER/ ADMINISTRATOR	1.0 To support teacher-learner-parent relationship 1.0.1 To identify learner needs, interests, strengths 1.0.2 To determine effectiveness in meeting learner needs, interests 1.0.3 To assist self-understanding of personal growth 1.0.4 To facilitate input to goal setting and program development 1.0.5 To assist reconsideration of learner objectives 1.0.6 To assess the effectiveness of instructional personnel	1.1 To support teacher-learner-parent relationship 1.1.1 To facilitate goal setting and attainment of objectives 1.1.2 To provide insight and self-understanding 1.1.3 To encourage positive motivation 1.1.4 To assist task clarification	1.2 To support teacher-learner-parent relationship 1.2.1 To facilitate goal setting and attainment of objectives 1.2.2 To learn about the academic, social and physical growth of their child 1.2.3 To support involvement in the educational process 1.2.4 To understand the teacher's perceptions of their child	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
SCHOOL/ PROGRAM	2.0 To determine school/ program effectiveness 2.0.1 To assist self-evaluation 2.0.2 To assess the attainment of school/program objectives 2.0.3 To facilitate school=community relations 2.0.4 To assist input into school policy and program development	2.1 To determine school/ program effectiveness 2.1.1 To assist self-evaluation 2.1.2 To assist input into school policy and program development 2.1.3 To assess the attainment of school/program objectives 2.1.4 To facilitate school=community relations	2.2 To determine school/ program effectiveness 2.2.1 To assist self-evaluation 2.2.2 To assist input into school policy and program development 2.2.3 To assess the attainment of school/program objectives 2.2.4 To facilitate school=community relations	2.3 To determine school effectiveness 2.3.1 To assist program development & modification, site and fiscal planning 2.3.2 To identify staffing needs 2.3.3 To re-assess school needs, philosophy, goals, priorities & attainment of objectives 2.3.4 To provide basis for school=community input 2.3.5 To determine staff effectiveness	2.4 To assist the realization & reconsideration of program objectives & priorities 2.4.1 To provide input to district policy 2.4.2 To assist in program, site, & fiscal planning 2.4.3 To identify & communicate program needs & effectiveness 2.4.4 To identify staffing & resource needs 2.4.5 To assess administrator effectiveness (district only)
DISTRICT, STATE, FEDERAL	3.0 To determine effectiveness of programs & systems 3.0.1 To assist program development & modification 3.0.2 To provide input to district policy, resource allocation & decision-making 3.0.3 To assess staffing and in-service needs 3.0.4 To assist state & federal planning	3.1 To determine effectiveness of programs & systems 3.1.1 To assist program development & modification 3.1.2 To provide input to district policy, resource allocation & decision-making 3.1.3 To assist state & federal planning	3.2 To determine effectiveness of programs & systems 3.2.1 To assist program development & modification 3.2.2 To provide input to district policy, resource allocation & decision-making 3.2.3 To assist state & federal planning	3.3 To determine effectiveness of programs & systems 3.3.1 To assess program effectiveness & needs 3.3.2 To provide input to district policy, resource allocation & decision-making 3.3.3 To assess staffing and inservice needs 3.3.4 To assess administrative support needed 3.3.5 To assist state & federal planning	3.4 To determine effectiveness of programs & systems 3.4.1 To assess program effectiveness & needs 3.4.2 To assist dist., state, & fed. planning 3.4.3 To provide basis for resource allocation 3.4.4 To assess administrator effect (district) 3.4.5 To identify trends

LEVELS OF REPORTING AND UTILIZING INFORMATION

The Evaluation Matrix (Figure 1, p. 4), shows the purposes of evaluation for decision makers. The matrix differentiates among the types of information needed by persons who are involved in different aspects of evaluation.

School=community members should be sensitive to the differing levels at which evaluative information will be reported and utilized. Good evaluative information may be interpreted at multiple levels and be addressed to different types of decision-makers. The matrix presents a two-way classification system for identifying the level at which information is to be reported and the decision-makers who will use the information.

The vertical dimension on the Matrix lists the three major levels at which evaluative information is likely to be reported and utilized: the individual student; the program or school, and district, state or federal. Information about the individual student is important to three types of decision-makers: the teacher/principal/staff responsible for designing the educational program for the student; the individual student himself; and the parents of the individual student. Information about individual students is **not** appropriate for use by the school advisory council or at the district, state, or federal levels. Hence, the two cells under those headings are marked "not applicable".

RELATION TO OTHER EVALUATIONS

The school=community evaluation described herein focuses on the school=community goals and is not much concerned with district, state or national goals or programs (except as they are shared by the school). Its energies are devoted primarily to determining how well students in the school are achieving school=community goals. The information developed by this local evaluation may assist the district and state in making policy decisions relating to education, but that would be an incidental purpose. The important purpose is use by the school=community at the local level.

LIMITATIONS OF CURRENT EVALUATIONS

The present state of the art of evaluation can only be described as inadequate. To demonstrate how limited it is, consider this list of goals widely used by California school districts in establishing their own goals and priorities:

1. Understand and practice the skills of family living;
2. Learn how to be a good manager of time, money, and property;
3. Gain a general education;
4. Develop good character and self-respect;
5. Develop skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening;
6. Learn and understand the changes that take place in the world;
7. Learn how to examine and use information;
8. Develop a desire for learning now and in the future;
9. Develop pride in one's work and a feeling of self-worth;
10. Prepare to enter the world of work;
11. Practice and understand the ideas of health and safety;
12. Learn to respect and get along with people who think, dress, and act differently from oneself;
13. Understand and practice democratic ideas and ideals;
14. Learn to respect and get along with those with whom we work and live;
15. Learn how to use leisure time;
16. Learn how to be a good citizen;
17. Develop the ability to make job selections;
18. Learn to appreciate culture and beauty.

For most of these goals there exist no established instruments. However, the fact assessment instruments aren't refined in many areas shouldn't diminish the priority placed on such goals. Nor should the present state of the art of evaluation inhibit efforts at program or personnel development in these areas. Some communities have put some of these social and affective goals ahead of reading, writing, and arithmetic; more will likely do so in the future. Yet these goals have received little or no attention from test developers. **Volume III** suggests constructive alternatives to tests for progress toward these goals.

The state of the art of evaluation is seriously inadequate in detecting regrettable results of schooling. For example, some teachers emphasize the mechanics of writing (spelling, grammar, punctuation, and legibility), while not developing such valuable attributes of writing as imagination, imagery, wit, style, insight, purpose, suspense, and entertainment. Consequently, many students are not developing full writing skills. Hence they believe they cannot write. Current evaluation systems don't reveal shortcomings of this kind.

SELECTING METHODS OF EVALUATION

The limited development of evaluation methods means that for most goals and objectives, the school community must rely on their own ways of gathering information. In fact, carefully developed methods exist only for some of the traditional academic goals. For such goals, tests are normally used, for they closest measure what children have learned without any influence of personal judgment of those scoring the tests. However, even with respect to such tests, caution must be exercised on two fronts. The school=community goal may be structured so that it is impossible to find a standard test appropriate for it. One must be sure, before adopting a test, that it indeed measures progress to the desired goal and not to some other goal that merely resembles the derived goal in certain respects. When a directly applicable standard test can't be found, the school=community must develop its own method. That will have disadvantages (pointed out in **Volume III**), but it has the most important property: direct relevance to the goal.

The second caution concerns hidden hurdles which make the test inappropriate for some students. For example, many tests assume a knowledge of the English language, unwarranted for children whose parents speak limited or no English. Other tests assume knowledge of the white middle American cultural background — an assumption unwarranted for most minority children and many less affluent white children. Minority persons must participate in developing evaluation programs to guard against inclusion of inappropriate evaluation techniques.

For many of the school=community's goals, there is no adequate standard test. Even for goals for which tests exist, one should avoid placing an overemphasis on standardized testing. Throughout, remember that the primary standard in assessment should be the **relevance** of the particular technique to decisions about development of the student and the particular goal under consideration. Ultimately, the **meaningfulness** of an assessment device and its implications for **change** in the student, in goals or in the learning situation, are more important than statistical or other technical properties of a test score.

TRADITIONAL VERSUS WHOLE SCHOOL EVALUATION

The traditional approach to evaluation is based on the assumption that a student's learning can be separated out of the school, not to mention the family and community, and evaluated apart from the context in which he or she lives and learns.

The whole school approach assumes no student wishes to be dumb or ignorant and therefore that a student who fails to learn to his or her full potential has somehow been turned off by the school or at least failed to be turned on by the school. Hence the whole school approach focuses on the school as a human organization in which every member (student, parent, principal, teacher, teacher's aide, secretary and janitor) has an important role. Whole school evaluation examines the school in its entire range of activities. Many activities go on in any such large collection of humans that may seem unrelated to the formal learning activities. There are leaders, followers, and outcasts; cliques and intrigues; teacher's favorites and behavior problems; competition for rewards and implicit understanding that some will never get rewards no matter how hard they compete; secure and insecure adults as well as students; bullies and the bullied; daily triumphs and defeats — while the defeats may appear trivial to adults, they can be absolute disasters to students.

Whole school evaluation declares that the key to success or failure can be found somewhere in this mass of human interactions. It may not be easy to find but if the school=community is determined that every student shall learn to full potential, the community must undertake full investigation of total impact of the school on those students who are not learning well. That means every significant interaction of student with another person (adult or peer) must be considered. Every student and adult in the school must admit to the possibility that his or her behavior toward the failing student may be contributing to the failure. Parents are not exempt from this search and would hopefully be anxious to change any aspects of their own behavior which might be interfering with learning.

Thus whole school evaluation demands full dedication to learning on the part of everyone in the school=community and, in particular, a willingness on the part of every adult and student to accept personal responsibility for helping others to learn, and for being a learner one's self. Advocates of whole school evaluation believe a school=community which seriously undertakes this approach can bring about exceptionally high morale and appreciation for accomplishment in a school and hence exceptionally high levels of growth for all students.

TRADITIONAL VERSUS WHOLE PERSON EVALUATION

The traditional evaluative approach implies that a student can be separated into relatively independent parts — an arithmetic part, a reading part, a writing part, a citizenship part, an athletic part, a personality part, and so on — and that an accurate appraisal of the student's progress can be assembled from separate measurements of those parts.

Whole person evaluation asserts that a measurement of a person which focuses on one of his or her parts is of such limited usefulness as to be hardly worth the effort. A person's score on an arithmetic test sheds little light on the person as a whole; a whole person has many dimensions beyond that. How can one make a useful judgment about the whole person on the basis of a measurement of a single dimension? A traditionalist answers that an arithmetic score is useful for judging whether that person needs to put more effort into developing arithmetic competence.

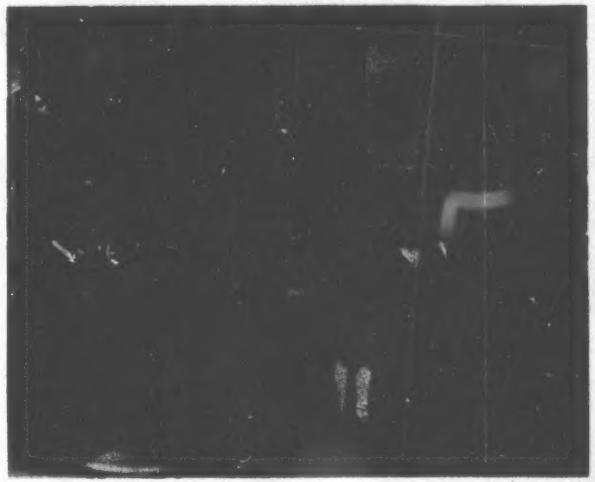
The advocate of whole person evaluation has two responses. First, that's no basis for saying the person should devote more effort to such development because that depends on other characteristics of the person. If the person has great mathematical talent, always makes high scores on mathematics tests, and has decided to become a mathematician, it makes sense for that person to devote much effort toward developing his/her mathematical talent. If a person who scores low in mathematics has extraordinary artistic talent and is resolved to become a portrait painter, then it might not make much sense for him or her to devote much effort to mathematics. Diagnostic testing may be useful, but it's not best to make a recommendation about what a person should do on an isolated bit of data.

Second, a test is not needed to make even that judgment. The student is aware of his or her arithmetic competence; so are the teacher, fellow students and probably even parents are reasonably so. A judgment by the student and those who are concerned about the student about how much effort should go to arithmetic doesn't need a test score; it rests on the nature of the whole person — not on the measurement of the present level of competence.

The essential advantage of whole person evaluation is in the personalization and humanization of evaluation. Within human limitations, the student is viewed with all his or her talents and failings and those concerned with the educational program can make sensible decisions about it and have the best possible basis for persuading the student it is sensible. Persuasion is easier because in whole person evaluation, the student's own goals and value judgments are considered. This contrasts to basing a student's educational program on test scores alone.

PERSONAL VALUES OF STUDENTS

A superior educational system provides a unique education for each student especially related to his or her talents and interests. As individuals, students should be evaluated on the basis of their progress toward their own personal goals, as well as their progress toward school=community goals. Of course, schools and parents have a responsibility to try to persuade each student to select goals appropriate to his or her own talents and interests which at the same time give the student a reasonable prospect of a satisfying life. But identity with the school=community goals is not a test of the validity of the student's goals. The diversity of goals and priorities from community to community is evidence of that.



SOME PROPERTIES OF GOOD EVALUATIVE PROCESSES

1. **Comprehensiveness.** Every goal should be included in the evaluation process. If some goals are omitted, the programs serving those goals may not be improved. Balance is uncommon in evaluation processes. The tendency is to evaluate goals that are easy to evaluate (that is, for which tests are readily available) and to neglect goals difficult to evaluate. Traditional goals for which well-developed evaluation tools exist should not be relied on exclusively, nor preclude efforts to develop evaluation procedures for other important goals.

2. **Positive posture.** Too often evaluation processes are looked upon as devices for detecting who is not doing well. A good evaluation process studiously avoids that posture. Its philosophy is that the purpose of the evaluation is to discover what and how **improvements** might be made. It focuses more on programs than on persons.

3. **Protection of privacy.** It is not acceptable or necessary to reveal information about an individual's progress to anyone other than that individual and one or two other persons charged with interpreting its meaning to the individual. In the case of a student, only the student, the teacher and the student's parents would normally have access to the information, although a counselor or school psychologist might be included (Ed. Code Sec. 10901).

4. **Constant attention to usefulness.** There is a strong tendency in any information gathering endeavor to collect certain categories of information because "it might be useful to someone." The result is a great waste of effort because such information usually gets filed away never to be examined by anyone. A good evaluation process will specify in advance, for every item of information to be collected, who will use the information and for what purposes.

5. **Simplicity and clarity of reporting.** Professionals in the field of evaluation have developed a fairly elaborate vocabulary not useful for communicating with non-professionals. All essential ideas should be translated into laypersons' language and included in all reports to students and the public. Particularly, the general public must have a thorough understanding of how progress toward goals is being measured and what the progress has been, as measured. Otherwise, citizen participation in school=community decisions will fall short of its potential for improving students' education.

SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCILS

One way to accomplish citizen participation is to form advisory councils at every school and for the district. Advisory councils provide an opportunity for meaningful participation, for school personnel and lay citizens to work earnestly together.

The school advisory council (council) is called upon to advise. It advises the principal, the school=community, and the district on certain school matters, and generally acts as the middleman between the school and the community on educational affairs. (See Figure 2, p. 11.)

A council is preferably composed of equal numbers of parents, students, other community members, and school staff. In primary (K-3) schools, parents take the place of student members, thereby providing those councils with one-half parents, one-fourth other community members, and one-fourth school staff. Procedures must be developed to assure effective representation of divergent points of view on the council. Election and selection by lot are the most democratic methods.

Generally, the task of the council is to help knit together the needs of the community and the goals, programs, evaluation design and resources of the individual school. This can be accomplished by:

- serving as a steering committee for the goal setting process (see **Volumes I and II**)*;
- overseeing a periodic review of school needs;
- recommending an evaluation design for the school;
- reviewing progress toward the school's goals;
- facilitating communication between the school and community;
- providing a forum for discussion of important issues related to goals and evaluation;
- providing necessary information to categorical aid programs' advisory committees, where they exist (see p. 17).

It is not the council's job to develop and maintain instructional and evaluation programs. That is the responsibility of the professional educator, in cooperation with students and parents. The council should advise on school level decisions, leaving day-to-day operations to the principal, teachers, students and other staff members.

*Joint Committee on Educational Goals and Evaluation, **Education For The People, Volume I, Guidelines for Total Community Participation in Forming and Strengthening the Future of Public Elementary and Secondary Education in California** (Sacramento: California Legislature and State Department of Education; 1972).

*Joint Committee on Educational Goals and Evaluation, **Education For The People, Volume II, A Resource Book For School=Community Decision-Making** (Sacramento: California Legislature and State Department of Education; 1972).

TRAINING OF SCHOOL= COMMUNITY MEMBERS

The assignments recommended for school= community members will often be new to them. Roles must be clearly defined to facilitate these new relationships. Communication and leadership skills are needed. Lay participants require a minimal level of knowledge of school law and governance, budgeting, and educational alternatives to contribute effectively to the advisory process.

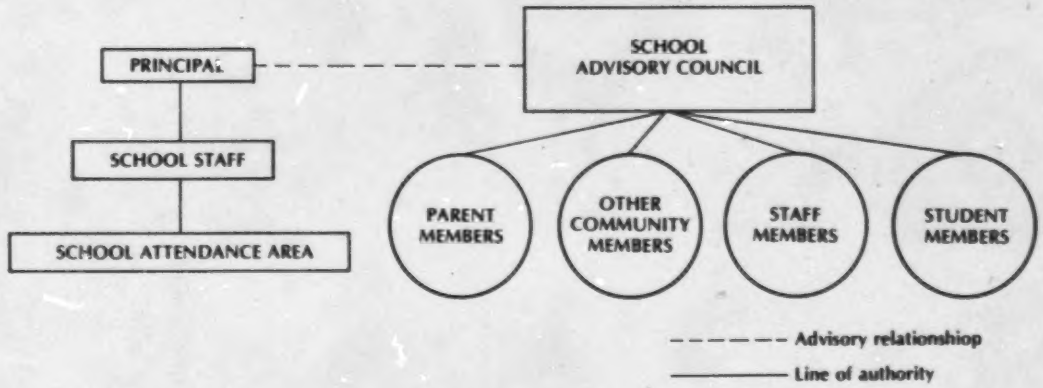
Training in these areas will benefit most participants including school personnel. It will help prevent frustration and misunderstanding, and contribute to healthful cooperation and consensus-building for all. School, district and state resources should be provided for such training.

USING MEETINGS TO SOLVE PROBLEMS

All the responsibilities delegated to the various district=community members require goodwill, patience, forthrightness, and good communication, to make effective decisions.

Participatory decision-making provides an opportunity for facilitating understanding, increasing motivation, and building trust. At the same time it creates the possibility for disappointment, frustration, and conflict. Personal expectations and values, organizational roles, and human uncertainty all contribute to an uneasiness about working in groups, unless the participants are bound by some common goals and have learned to work together. Specific care should be given to creating the conditions for effective group processes. (See **Education For The People Volumes I, II and III,** for additional information on participatory decision-making.)

Figure 2. SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL MODEL



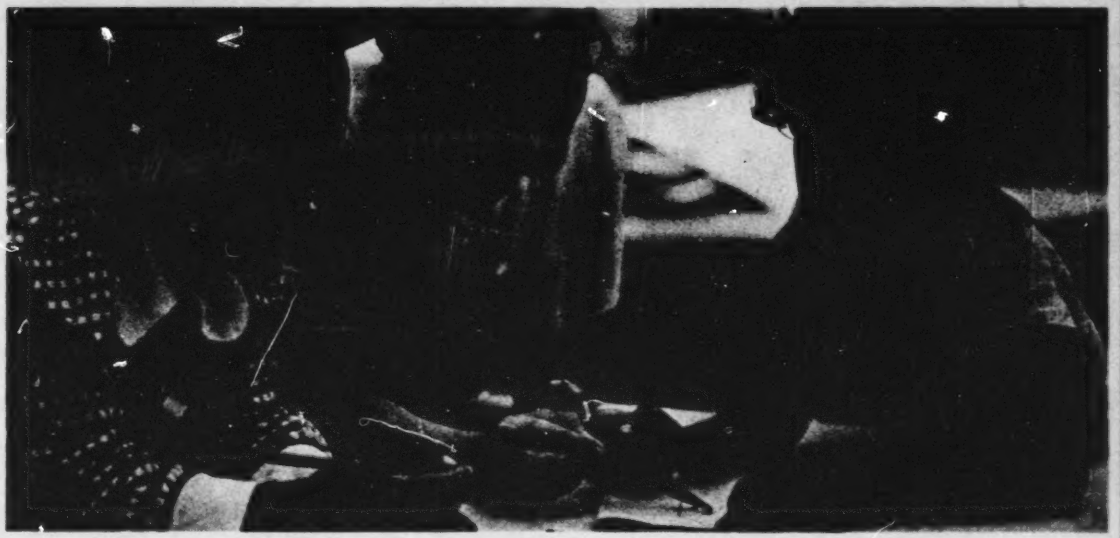
PRINCIPAL'S ROLE

Accountability and responsibility for local school decisions must rest with the principal, who operates under the delegated authority of the superintendent and governing board. In having final responsibility, the principal should consider all factors and viewpoints bearing on an issue (especially advice from the council on goals, evaluation and budget priorities).

The responsibility for personnel matters at each school site rests with the principal. The school advisory council may advise the principal of general concerns regarding students and school personnel. However, any challenge to the conduct or competency of an individual student or staff member must be pursued through procedures established by State law and/or policies of the school district.

The school principal, working under the specific direction of the superintendent, would have the responsibility to:

- establish a school advisory council in accordance with district procedures;
- attend all school advisory council meetings or provide an alternate;
- be responsible for recording council proceedings and keeping council minutes;
- provide secretarial services for council activities;



- advise the council on goal setting, evaluation design, program implementation, and other concerns;
- consider advice and viewpoints regarding goal setting, evaluation design, program implementation, and other concerns;
- provide adequate housing, supplies, and accommodations for council activities;
- be a go-between for council, staff, students, parent groups, district administration, and interested citizens;
- forward advisory council suggestions which could affect other schools in the district to the district advisory council;
- communicate specific actions taken by the governing board, based on council suggestions, to the school advisory council;
- forward recommendations and suggestions from school council to district council when such suggestions or recommendations are outside the scope of the local school's authority to decide.

THE ROLE OF THE DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Moderate and large school districts will find the need for a district advisory council to coordinate and present the work of the school councils. Its role is similar to that of school councils, except it advises on districtwide matters. It is the funneling agency for school councils to the superintendent and governing board. (See Figure 3, p. 14.).

The district council would be made up of representatives of the various school councils, with a few members elected-at-large or selected by lot from the district as a whole. Procedures should assure fair representation of parents, students, other community members, and staff on the council. (In large districts, administrative zones can be established and zone councils elected. These would channel information to the district council.)

The district advisory council along with the superintendent, would consider recommendations made by the various school councils. When appropriate, these recommendations would be presented to the governing board by the superintendent. In turn, the district council or superintendent makes recommendations to school councils.

All policy decisions are the responsibility of the governing boards.

ROLE OF PARENT-TEACHER-STUDENT GROUPS

Parent-teacher-student groups in school districts are an already established link between school and community.

Typically, these groups serve the following functions at both school and district levels:

- attempt to build strong parent-teacher-student relationships;
- advise the principal/superintendent on important issues;
- serve as a community channel between staff and parents;
- generate parental support for the school program;
- sponsor community service activities;
- encourage parental involvement in the formal education of children;
- protect the rights and welfare of students.

These groups are encouraged to contribute to the school decision-making process by studying school-related problems and submitting recommendations to district administrators and governing boards, and by cooperating with school advisory councils in their studies and recommendations.

GOVERNING BOARD'S ROLE

The governing board establishes policies under which the district administrative staff operates the school district.

Direct responsibilities which may be assumed by the board which affect advisory councils include:

- developing goals and procedures for community involvement;
- adopting programs to meet local community needs;
- developing a policy for establishing advisory councils;
- approving an advisory council plan which encourages community involvement;
- establishing communication procedures with all segments of the district= community;
- acting on district advisory council recommendations submitted by the superintendent;
- financing the operation of councils, including training, consultants, and facilitating participation of members;
- acting on an annual district progress report to the community submitted by the district advisory council;
- acting on an annual school progress report to the community for each school in the district.

SUPERINTENDENT'S ROLE

The superintendent operates under the delegated authority and policies of the governing board. (The people elect the board, the board hires the superintendent.) He is responsible for federal, state and local requirements and programs.

The superintendent, working under the general direction of the governing board, may also:

- serve as advisor to the district advisory council;
- establish a district advisory council in accordance with board procedures;
- develop procedures governing the operation of the council;
- attend district advisory council meetings or provide an alternate;
- provide supplies for council activities;
- analyze issues and viewpoints, before advising the district council;
- advise the council on issues;
- act as liaison between council, district staff, and governing board;
- advise the council on legal matters, board policy, procedural requirements;
- inform the district council of actions taken by the governing board;
- implement actions recommended by the district council after receiving governing board approval;
- notify a principal of anticipated action affecting enrollment, program, staff, or facilities of a school.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE(S) TO THE BOARD

Student opinion provides important information for the evaluation of school policy and program alternatives. A governing board may therefore wish to establish a student representative(s) to the board to act as liaison — a channel of communication — between students and the governing board.

Guidelines for a student representative might include the following:

- the representative(s) serves in a non-voting advisory capacity to the governing board;
- the representative(s) attends regular meetings of the governing board (present law doesn't permit the student representatives to vote);
- expenses incurred in performing duties as student representative(s) will be paid by the district;

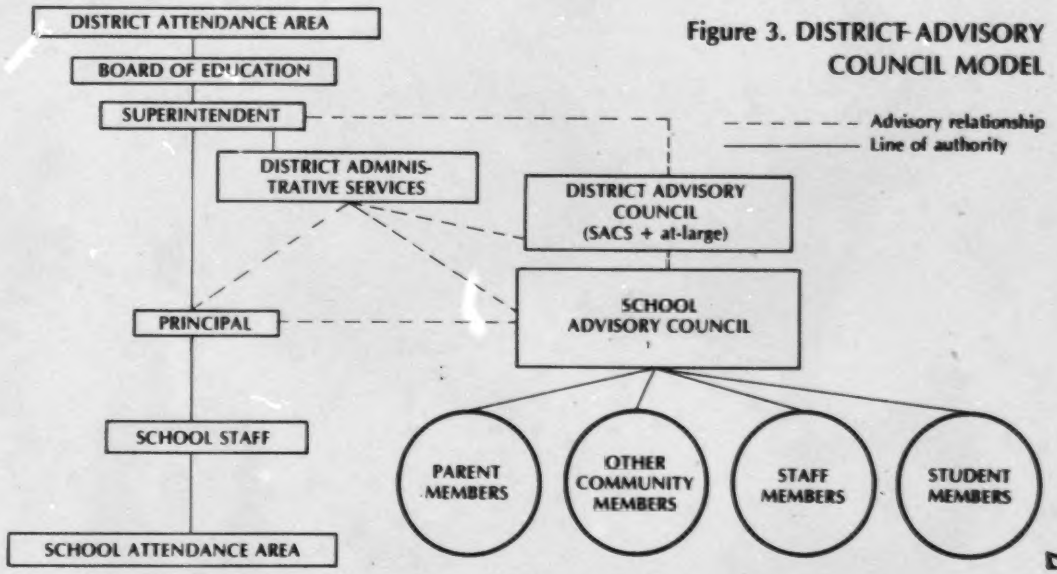


Figure 3. DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL MODEL

- the representative(s) is accorded the same consideration and treatment as a regular member;
- the representative(s) attends meetings of the district advisory council to maintain liaison with student, staff, and community members;
- the student representative(s) should be elected.

ROLE OF CERTIFICATED EMPLOYEES

Teachers and other instructional staff have rights and responsibilities as employees and interests and concerns as professionals which should be considered at all levels of decision-making in a school district. Participation on school and district advisory councils provides teachers a voice in evaluation of policies and programs.

COMMITTEES TO PLAN AND EVALUATE CATEGORICAL AID PROGRAMS

Many schools and districts receive state and federal money to serve students in certain categories (e.g.: handicapped, retarded and intellectually gifted students; and programs to improve reading, mathematics and bilingual education). Most categorical programs require parent participation.

Parent and community involvement on advisory committees are required by the State Board of Education for districts to receive categorical program funds (form A-127).

These programs require districts to involve parents, teachers, and community representatives in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of their programs. They require each participating district and school have an advisory committee with broad representation of the parent population, staff, and community. Students may serve on such committees where appropriate. The district is required to provide training opportunities for members of advisory committees.

It is suggested a categorical aid programs advisory committee be appointed at both at both the district and school levels to serve as the advisory bodies for programs targeted for a portion of the student population. (See Participatory Decision-Making Model, p. 19.) These committees may utilize task force advisory groups in each program area to increase participation, distribute the work load, and meet federal and state requirements.

The advisory council would operate for the school as a whole, the committee for categorical aid programs only. The council and committee should communicate and cooperate.

The district advisory committee, composed of elected representatives from each of the school advisory committees in the district plus a few district-appointed members, is the funneling agency for school committees to the superintendent and governing board (see Figure 4, p. 19). Its basic responsibility is information exchange with the district advisory council, the superintendent, district staff, and school committees to assure the careful planning, operating, and evaluation of categorical aid programs. The superintendent, in cooperation with the district committee, may appoint ad hoc or permanent task forces to oversee development of individual programs.

SCHOOL=COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN DETERMINING SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

SUPPORT NEEDED FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Most state and federal programs are concentrated among students in their formative years. Each program requires its own set of evaluative data, many times derived from the same or a similar group of students. As a result, elementary school principals have been hardest hit with additional responsibilities. Often the elementary principal is the school's only administrator, without additional support to assist in administering these special programs and meeting federal and state requirements.

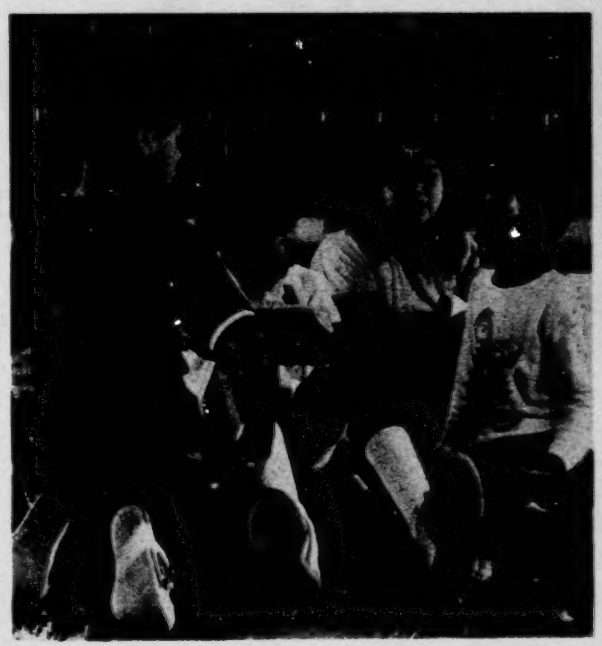
Hence, creation of a categorical aid committee **and** a school advisory council at an elementary school risks complicating an already complicated situation. Training the principal and school=community members to maximize their effectiveness in working together is much needed. Additionally, the state should improve the coordination of state evaluation activities to reduce the duplications and demands on school and district administrators.

ORGANIZING FOR THE EVALUATIVE PROCESS AT EACH SCHOOL

The school advisory council advises on the design for the evaluation process, the board adopts it and it is the responsibility of the school staff to implement it. The council is the expert on community values and goals; educators are experts in designing and operating educational programs; designing an evaluative process requires both sets of experts. The design activity provides an unparalleled opportunity for precise communication between both parties, who must have a thorough appreciation of the other's position if the evaluation is to serve its purpose.

The school advisory council at each school begins the process of developing an evaluation design specific to its school programs.

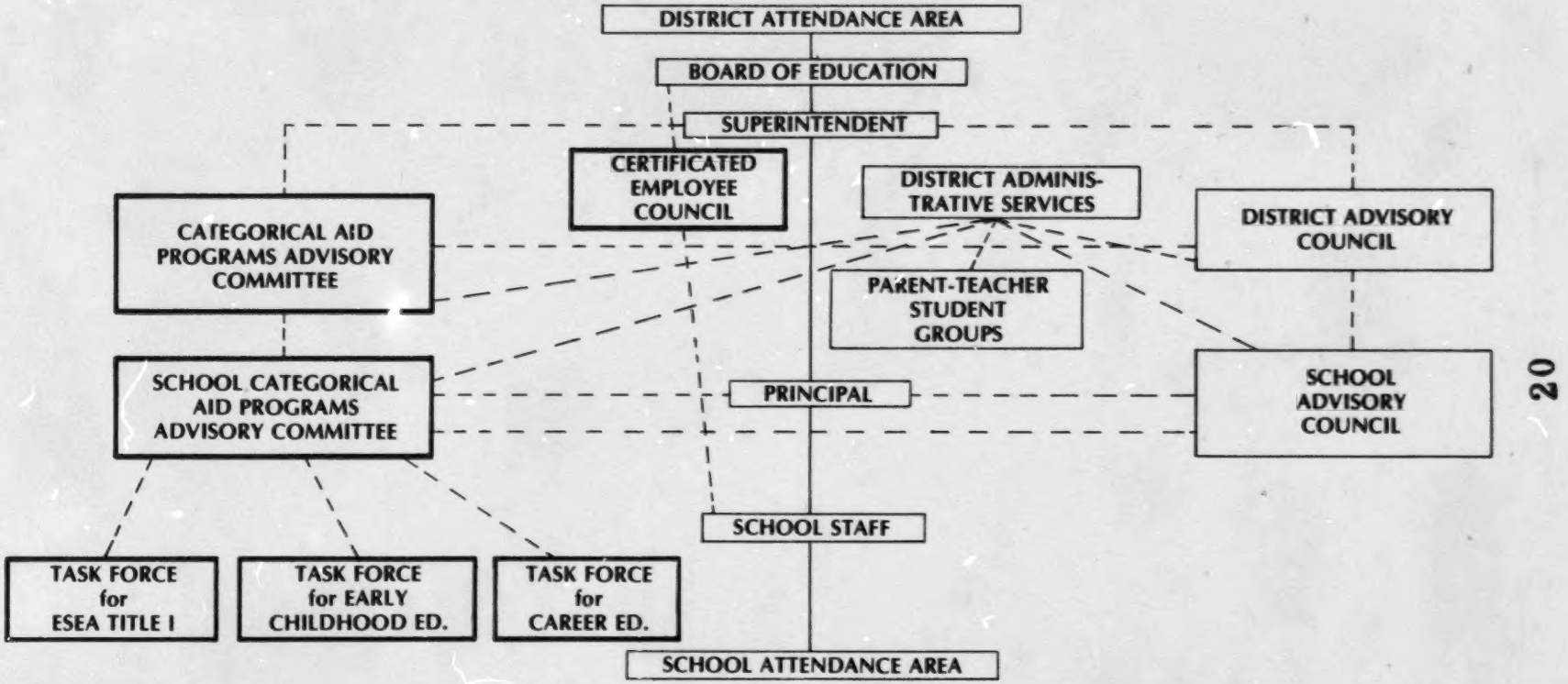
This evaluative process does not intend that school=communities get directly into the area of program redesign (including curricula, program objectives, and material selection). That is left for professional staff to determine, with input from students, and utilizing assessment data and recommendations generated by the evaluative process. Such program plans would be shared with the school advisory council and interested members of the school=community.



SPECIFIC STAGES IN THE EVALUATIVE PROCESS

No two evaluation systems will ever be alike, because of the unique context of each school program. Some stages in the process might be common to most activities. (See Figure 5, p. 21.)

Figure 4. PARTICIPATORY DECISION-MAKING MODEL



Note: Any school district advisory body or individual may report directly to the governing board on urgent or unresolved matters.

- - - - - Advisory relationship
——— Line of authority

SCHOOL=COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN DETERMINING SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

Stage A. The school advisory council reviews the products of the school's goal setting process to assure that plans for evaluation fit within the philosophy of the school as reflected in the school's goals.

The council meets with other members of the school=community to deepen their understanding of the needs of the community and the context of school programs. Program designers (including classroom teachers, curriculum developers, etc.) are invited to participate so the school advisory council gains understanding of how school goals were translated into specific programs and objectives.

Some criteria for evaluation will be found in the program's objectives. Often these are so explicit that it's easy to examine data and verify whether objectives were achieved. This is true of objectives stated in measurable terms (e.g.: all high school students can comprehend with 90% mastery the front page of the local newspaper). Some good program objectives are not so explicit, but may be defined by a list of assessment items which are measurable.

Stage B. After receiving clarification from the various groups and/or individuals, the school advisory council defines an evaluation philosophy consistent with their community context and school goals. This is a critical stage. It's possible that some goals, programs, and objectives are not amenable to evaluation through standardized techniques (such as paper-and-pencil tests). The council must not view evaluation as a routine function (e.g.: classroom teachers administering three tests at the beginning and end of the school year).

A sound evaluation philosophy makes the task easier; it points out a variety of techniques for the evaluation plan; it makes information accessible to the advisory council. In effect, an evaluation philosophy built on the solid foundation of educational philosophy, as reflected in goals, broadens the possibilities open to evaluation systems and offers assurance that evaluation is an integral activity related to educational planning.

Stage C. Once the advisory council has a clear picture of its mission and philosophy, and a sense of school goals and their translation into school programs, it may begin to participate in designing an evaluation program for its school.

Components of the design might include:

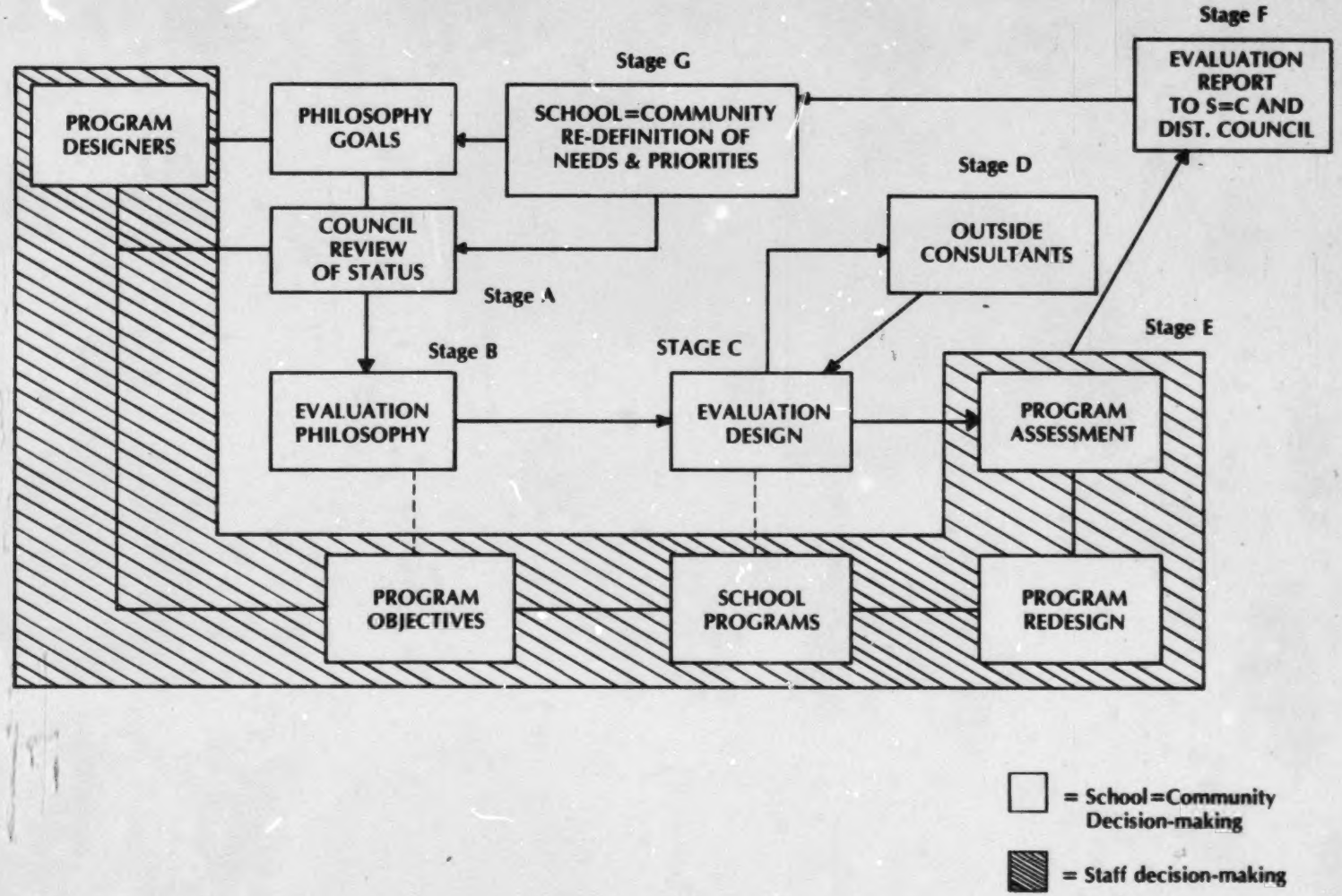
- Why we are evaluating. Every evaluative activity should have a purpose. Directly or indirectly, are we evaluating to establish a basis for a particular kind of decision (e.g.: to better allocate money), to facilitate communication, to increase participation, or to raise achievement levels? The reason should be made clear to the school=community.

- What is to be evaluated (statements on specific programs and their respective goals and objectives). This might include a child's learning in specific subject areas; personal development components; the learning environment; a staff development program; a program's effectiveness in relationship to its cost; the utilization of resources (e.g.: physical facilities and human resources); or a program for increasing school=community participation in program planning and implementation.

- How it is to be evaluated (a statement specific to each "what"). This includes strategies (plans of action) for how programs are to be evaluated, and when, and perhaps more important, the **context** of the evaluation activity. (How will the evaluation affect the learner, teacher, or program?).

Stage D. The school advisory council can rely on the experience of district, county, and State Department of Education consultants. They can inform on evaluation

Figure 5. STAGES IN THE EVALUATIVE PROCESS



techniques, and in the use and reporting of data. They can assist in the interpretation of state and federal policies and laws.

Other consultants (scholars, researchers, academicians) can serve a similar function. (A researcher can comment on the validity or limitations of a particular test.)

Within the evaluation design, the school council recommends various techniques compatible with the program objectives for assessing the educational process and progress.

Stage E. Then an implementation plan is drawn and carried out: scheduling is done, responsibilities identified, and strategies for monitoring implementation of the plan are installed. Systematic assessment of progress toward goals is conducted. This information becomes the basis for evaluation of the program.

Stage F. After all information is collected and analyzed, a description of the progress toward meeting goals and objectives is written by the council. This might be done annually or otherwise as needed — dependent upon the purposes of the plan.

The statement is reported to the school=community and district advisory council to inform them of the school's progress toward achieving goals and objectives.

The statement is used as the basis for redesigning school programs and reworking program objectives, if appropriate. This feedback for redesign feature assures evaluation is performed in the context of what's important to that school.

Stage G. The statement of progress toward achieving the goals and objectives of specific school programs is used as the basis for an evaluation of the success of programs in meeting the community needs, and the impact of school programs in meeting school goals.

(See **Education For The People, Volume III, A Handbook for Determining School Effectiveness,** for more detailed information. It's available at your school.)

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

We have explained the task ahead of you. We now look to you to make this decision-making process a reality. We have some suggestions. You'll come up with more possibilities.

School administrators and governing board members may:

- Take the initiative and get the decision-making process started.

Students, parents, teachers and other school=community members may:

- Request the district governing board to establish advisory councils and/or committees for the district and at each school;
- Ask the principal and superintendent about their plans for involving the school=community in evaluation of the school and district programs;
- Hold neighborhood meetings to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the school program;
- Invite resource persons to speak about the future and the implications for schools;
- Ask teachers to allow time for class discussion on relevance in education (what schools should be doing for students and the community);
- Seek to serve on school and district advisory councils and committees;
- Organize, in cooperation with school administrators, faculty, students and community, forums on relevance and accountability in education.

For assistance, call or write:

- Your school or district office;
- Your county schools office;
- State Department of Education
  721 Capitol Mall
  Sacramento, CA 95814
  Telephone: (916) 445-4688